

Ra'iupu Marae of Makatea, Tuamotu Islands, Oceania

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Professor K. P. Emory (1933, 1934) reported only one existent *marae* on Makatea, that of Ra'iupu—but nobody could tell me where it was when I prospected the island in October 1961. It was rediscovered however in the first half year of 1963 by the Compagnie française des Phosphates d'Océanie, which then cleared the site of its thick vegetation and made a path leading to it—this without digging up the site for the valuable phosphates it contained—a most commendable act.

The *marae* is on the Patia domain, while Marama R414 is a further 100 metres southwest of the road from Temao to Moumu, where on Emory's map it is 'Patia, Marae' (Fig. 1, map). When phosphate ore was first excavated here, the *marae* was spared, but shrubs and the roots of an enormous banyan drawing substance from the rich soil soon overgrew and hid the site.

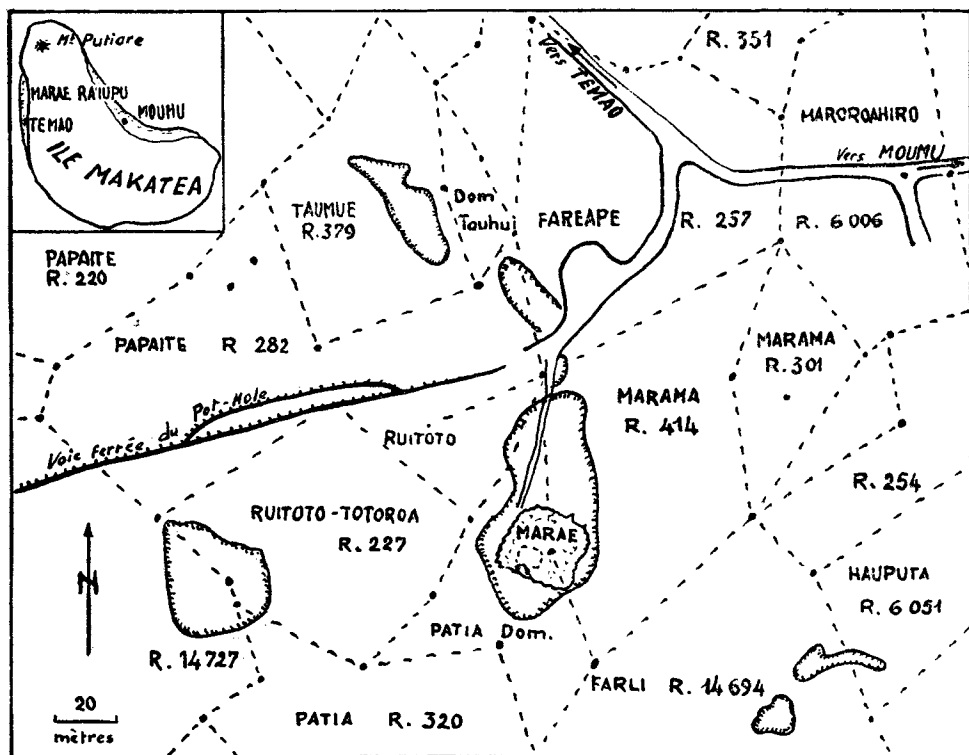


FIG. 1. Position of the Ra'iupu *marae* on Makatea Island. From a plan made by the C.F.P.O.



Photograph by Frank Ly Siou

The Ra'iupu marae (Ahu)

The monument is on a terrace whose perimeter, embanked with boulders, is about one metre thick (Fig. 2).

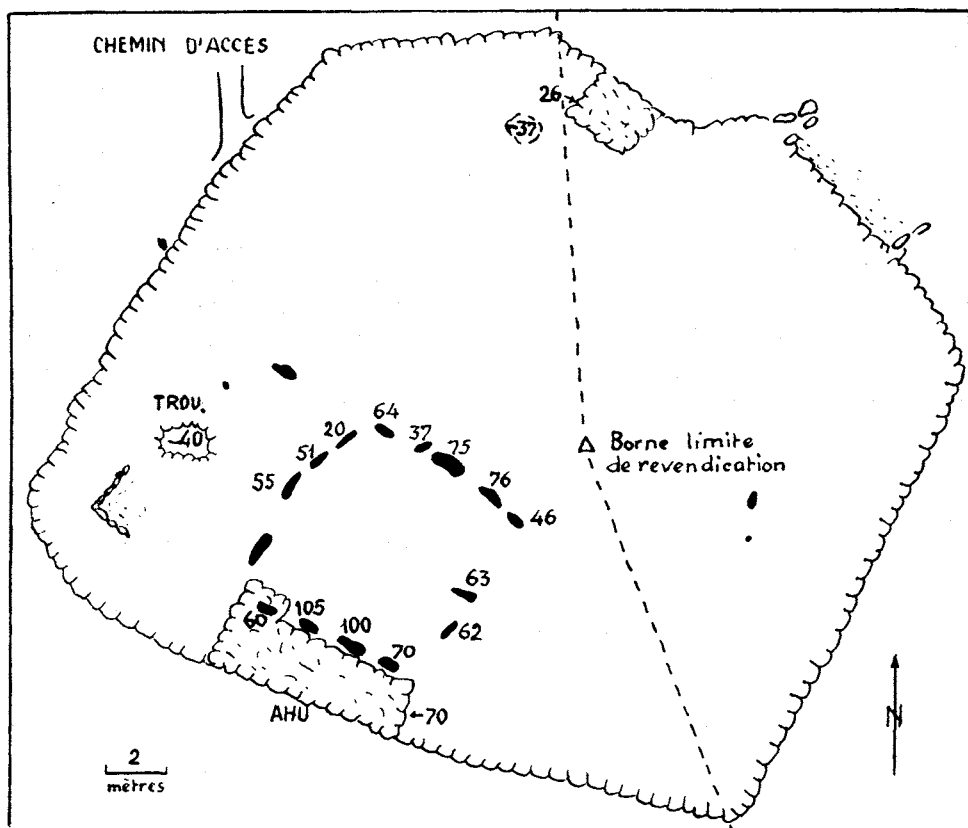


FIG. 2. Plan of the Ra'iupu marae on the terrace of the undisturbed deposit of phosphate.
By permission of the C.F.P.O.

The *ahu* in the southwest part is still in perfect condition, and is all round about 50 centimetres high. Roughly cut coral slabs support the 'raw' slabs which are piled up inside, horizontally (Pl. I).

Three upright stones face the *ahu*. One is a metre higher than the other two; the central stone, roughly anthropomorphic, looks much like the upright stones of the Katipa marae of Fakahina or the Ahutu marae of Tatakoto. A fourth stone stands on a small platform annexed to the *ahu*, as frequently seen in the marae of the Society Islands (the 'interior type' of Emory).

Other upright stones border the courtyard, which is roughly rectangular. A solitary stone 50 centimetres high lies outside the courtyard and faces the southwest annex structure. This is a hollow 40 centimetres deep into which the refuse of the ceremonial offerings were probably emptied. Another hollow was dug north of the marae, near a small rectangular pile of coral, situated in its north part (not shown in Emory's map).

When we examined the site, we found it strewn with human bones. These had been deposited on the monument by workmen who must have come across them when working on the neighbouring phosphate deposit.

The Ra'iupu *marae* shows the usual characteristics of the religious structures of the Western Tuamotu Islands: a rectangular court, a quadrangular *ahu* built of undressed coral and smallish in height; upright stones in front of the *ahu* with a small annex platform on which is also an upright stone.

However, its courtyard is covered all over with undressed slabs because of the unevenness of the ground of Makatea, which had to be banked up to form an artificial terrace.

The *marae* has strange similarities with ancient religious structures of the Society Islands. These also have an *ahu* without steps (of undressed stones) and a courtyard buttressed along its perimeter. These characteristics are also to be found on some of the Rurutu *marae*. The resemblances between the ancient monuments of the Western Tuamotu, of Tahiti and Rurutu are so striking that they have a common origin probably in the Society Islands, where they were elaborated.

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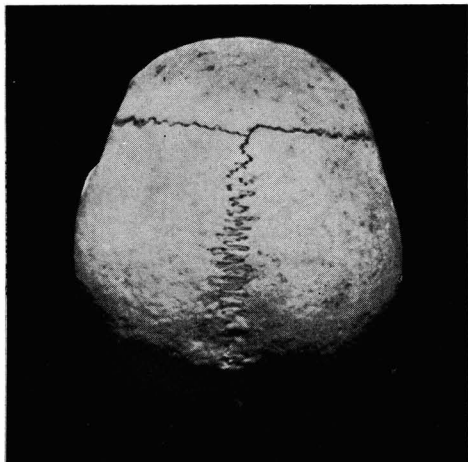
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T1



T2

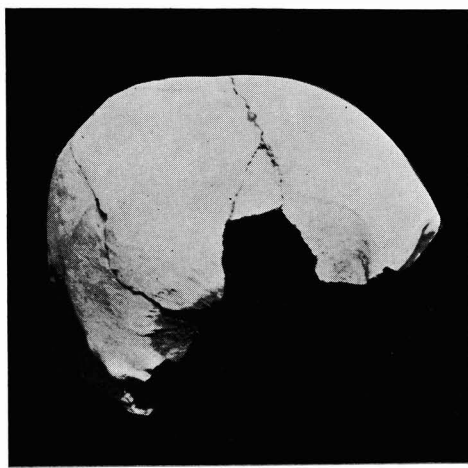
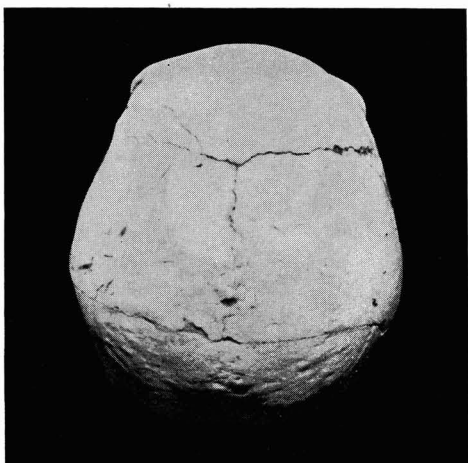


Human crania found on Ra'iupu *marae*, Makatea, Tuamotu Islands. See p. 215.
Photographs by Cl. Chippaux.

T 3



T 4



Human crania found on Ra'iupu marae, Makatea, Tuamotu Islands.
Photographs by Cl. Chippaux.

ANNEX

OBSERVATIONS SUR QUATRE CRÂNES RETROUVÉS PRÈS DU MARAE RA'IUPU
PAR CL. CHIPPAUX*Indice crânien horizontal.*

$T_1 = 80,12$ Brachycrâne juste à la limite de la *mésocrânie*.

$T_2 = 73,1$ *Dolichocrânie*.

$T_3 = 76,1$ *Mésocrânie*.

$T_4 = 82,6$ *Brachycrânie*.

L'indice est dispersé et il y a tendance à la mesobrachycrânie.

Indices de hauteur.

T_1 Indice moyen de hauteur basio bregmatique = 95,9

Indice moyen de hauteur porio bregmatique = 81,2
= concordance: *crâne haut*.

T_3 Indice moyen de hauteur basio bregmatique = 88,4

Indice moyen de hauteur porio bregmatique = 73,9
= concordance: *crâne haut*.

T_4 Indice moyen de hauteur basio bregmatique = non calculé car basion
Indice moyen de hauteur porio bregmatique = 73,4 [détruit.
= *crâne haut*.

Donc trois crânes 'haut' aux indices concordants.

Pour T_2 , les indices sont discordants.

En effet, si pour l'indice moyen de hauteur basio bregmatique, on obtient une valeur de 85,10, donc crâne haut/limite du crâne moyen, l'indice moyen de hauteur porio bregmatique indique un crâne 'bas'/limite crâne moyen avec une valeur de 67,10.

Ceci est dû à la distance assez forte entre le plan du basion et celui du porion (différence de 30 mm) alors que généralement elle oscille autour de 20 mm. J'ai déjà observé le fait sur des crânes malgaches.

Avec cette réserve, les quatre crânes sont du type 'haut' suivant les indices basio bregmatiques.